



Chapter 3 **Public** **Participation**

This chapter presents an overview of how the public was involved in shaping this plan; how the Citizen Advisory Group and public meetings were used to identify and prioritize the many issues, desires, and concerns about the Byway; and how to continue to involve the public in the implementation and furtherance of the management objectives of the corridor.

The Role of the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)

The development of a Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) started with the Maryland National Road Partnership Development Team providing a contact list of individuals representing organizations with either an interest in or a responsibility for managing the Byway as a touring route. This list included property owners, members of chambers of commerce, representatives of local tourism businesses and councils, store owners, historical society members, and others. In addition, each county traversed by the Byway was asked to appoint three representatives to serve on the CAG. From these lists, key person interviews were conducted, and initial lists of issues and concerns were developed, which would be addressed and refined by the CAG, and then presented at public workshops. A refined contact list was then developed, and invitations were sent out to this list to initiate the CAG.

A series of ten CAG meetings were conducted, each with the purpose of addressing a different set of issues related to the plan. A meeting schedule was created to build momentum for the project by holding most of the meetings at two-week intervals from September to early December. The CAG members were asked to provide alternates when unable to attend. Typical attendance for each meeting was 40-50 participants. The meeting locations were varied among several locations along the corridor, including Hagerstown, Ellicott City, Cumberland, Frostburg, and Frederick, in order to ease the travel burden for CAG members at either end of the corridor.

The ten CAG meetings were scheduled at key decision points in the planning effort:

- Development of the plan's vision statement, refining the list of preliminary goals and objectives (Meetings #1 and #2);
- Development of criteria for conservation priorities (Meetings #3 and #4);
- Discussion of heritage tourism and economic development strategies (Meeting #5);
- Discussion of land use strategies (Meeting #6);
- Discussion of road and right-of-way strategies (Meeting #7);
- Review of the draft plan (Meeting #8);
- Assignment of responsibilities for the plan's recommended priorities (Meeting #9); and
- Planning of "early actions" to be taken once the plan is adopted (Meeting #10).



Early on in the planning process, CAG members also participated in a unique photo-assignment in order to generate excitement about the plan and provide a means for presenting some of the hundreds of features along a very “long and skinny” project. CAG members were asked to develop a short tour based on their interests in the Byway. Using single-use cameras provided by the PDT, CAG members photographed their tours and submitted them (Figure 3-1).

Before each meeting, two or three slide shows of the tours were selected and presented. In addition, wall displays of all the tours received were printed out and exhibited at both the CAG and the public meetings for general interest. The tours were also used to gain additional information about the corridor’s historic resources, often revealing information that might be known only to people who had lived and worked along the Byway for many years.

Public Meetings

The Maryland National Road Partnership Development Team (PDT) conducted an initial “National Road On-the-Road” Conference to determine the level of interest in pursuing further recognition for the Byway in November of 1997. This conference generated an extensive amount of interest and enthusiasm in pursuing All-American Road designation for the route.

Following the successful conference on wheels, the PDT hired the consultant team, formed the advisory group and began a truly collaborative planning process that combined the outside expertise of the consultants with the in-depth local knowledge of the CAG members. Although the CAG was representative of many different points of view and geographic areas, additional opportunities for participation in the planning effort were developed for those individuals and groups that were not able to make the full sequence of CAG meetings.

Two rounds of public meetings were conducted at key points in the planning process. The first meetings were designed to ensure that the plan was headed in the “right direction.” The second set of meetings were organized to review the recommended management strategies. Press releases were used to draw in the general public. The meetings were extensively covered by local print, TV, and radio media.

The first group of public meetings was held on the evenings of September 27 and 28, 2000, in Frederick and Cumberland respectively. Notices were sent out to approximately 1200 individuals, from a list generated primarily from the “National Road On-the-Road” conference and property data along the route.

At the well-attended meetings, the purpose, goals, and objectives of the plan, as developed with the assistance of the CAG, were presented in order to solicit feedback. Maps showing the major features and resources found along the route and a definition of the



Figure 3-1 Single-use cameras were given to CAG volunteers to photograph their own tours of the Byway. By November 2000, approximately 500 photos had been collected amongst 27 tours.



Figure 3-2 Leroy and Jane Stull from Poplar Springs at the public meeting in Frederick, February 28, 2001.



Figure 3-3 Public meeting in Cumberland on March 1, 2001 with case studies and maps of Byway features displayed against the wall.

corridor were displayed around the meeting room. In addition, several of the CAG tour posters were exhibited.

Slides were presented to the groups to explain the National Scenic Byways program and the intrinsic qualities of the Maryland Historic National Road Scenic Byway. Break-out sessions were conducted to ask participants about what they saw as the current assets and obstacles facing the Byway. Participants were also asked to review and augment a list of suggested actions developed by the CAG to implement the draft vision. The results of the meetings demonstrated a high level of support for the vision and goals and provided specific direction for the development of management strategies.

Over the next several months, the PDT, consultants, and CAG developed and reviewed management strategies for each of the major goal areas of preservation, enhancement, interpretation, and tourism development. Case examples were developed for eight sites throughout the corridor to illustrate how the management strategies could be implemented.

The next public meetings were held on the evenings of February 28 and March 1, 2001, in Cumberland and Frederick respectively (Figures 3-2 through 3-4). The recommended management strategies were presented at these meetings using the case examples as illustrations. Participants at the meetings overwhelmingly supported the recommendations.

After the presentation, discussion was focused on the use of either a nonprofit group or a state-sponsored agency to form the management entity by which the Byway will be guided in the future. Strategies were also discussed for soliciting endorsements from local and county officials for the plan.

Ongoing Participation Plan

Both the PDT and the CAG recommend that the existing organizational structure be retained to begin the process of implementing the plan (a thorough discussion of ongoing management options is presented in chapter 6). Briefly, the PDT will continue to take the lead in organizing Citizen Advisory Group meetings (once per quarter, at a minimum) with the following agenda:

- Gain endorsements of the Corridor Partnership Plan, finalize forms, coordinate with other states, and submit the application for designation as an All-American Road to FHWA jointly with the five other National Road states;
- Pursue grant applications for high priority projects (must have a local sponsor and a state agency partner), especially the development of interpretive waysides and visitor facilities;
- Work with localities to amend comprehensive and open space plans to reference the recommendations of this plan, increasing chances for outside funding and providing localities with information about the



Figure 3-4 Mike Gregory (foreground) looks on, as Francis Zumbrun makes a point at the public meeting in Cumberland on March 1, 2001.



preservation, enhancement, interpretation, and tourism development opportunities associated with the Byway;

- Work with agencies and organizations currently marketing and promoting related activities (Civil War trails, Heritage Areas, greenways, and other scenic byways) that cross or are part of the corridor to incorporate Byway themes into existing marketing efforts, especially the current effort by the Maryland Office of Tourism Development to market the statewide scenic byways program; and
- Upon designation as an All-American Road (or National Scenic Byway), utilize organizational grants to establish either a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group or a state authority whose purpose will be to support preservation and enhancement activities along the Maryland Historic National Road Scenic Byway as described in Chapter 6.

To accomplish these initial goals, the Citizen Advisory Group will establish subcommittees for each of four main strategy areas:

- Preservation Committee;
- Enhancement Committee;
- Interpretation and Education Committee; and
- Marketing and Promotion Committee.

Each of these committees should have representation from each of the major jurisdictions and agencies along the byway. The PDT will continue to share responsibilities for coordinating with the five other National Road states through the National Road Alliance. A full responsibility table of corridor wide projects is included in Chapter 6.